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SOME NOTES ON THE FAMILY OF
WILLIAM PARSONS, THE FOUNDER OF EASTON,
AND THEIR RELATION TO THE MORAVIAN
CHURCH, WITH SOME CONNECTED
MATTER.

BY J. M. LEVERING.

Those who have some acquaintance with the history of Pennsylvania, and particularly of Northampton County, during the decades which preceded the Revolutionary War, know that William Parsons was a prominent man and in some respects an interesting character. A few of the oft-published and generally known facts of his life may be mentioned briefly as an introduction to the things not so generally known of which this paper will treat.

He was born in England, May 6, 1701, learned shoe-making in his youth and came to Pennsylvania before he was of age. While working at his trade in Philadelphia, he read and studied diligently, so that in course of time he found his way into the society of educated persons and gained reputation as "a man having a profound knowledge of mathematics."

He was a member of the famous "*Junto*," a club formed by Benjamin Franklin, soon after his return from England in 1726, to discuss ethics, politics and natural philosophy. It was developed, in 1743, into the American Philosophical Society. Men like John Bartram, of botanical fame, and Thomas Godfrey, the mathematician and inventor of the quadrant, were among the early members of the club. Referring to its formation, Franklin, in a letter dated April 5, 1744, mentions Parsons as Geographer.

In 1743 Mr. Parsons was appointed Surveyor-General of Pennsylvania. This was a position of importance and profit which called his peculiar qualifications into exercise, but the physical hardships connected with it caused him to present his resignation in 1748. It was accepted on June 10, by the Provincial Council, which then appointed Nicholas Scull to the office. Scull was a son-in-law of Solomon Jennings, an early

neighbor of the Moravian settlers at Bethlehem, who lived at the locality later known as the Geissinger Farms. Mr. Parsons then settled at Lancaster as a Justice of the Peace, but continued to survey at intervals.

May 9, 1750, he began, with Scull, to definitely lay out the town of Easton. He settled there after the erection of Northampton County out of the upper part of Bucks, by act of Assembly, March 11, 1752. He wrote to Secretary Peters, of Philadelphia, on December 3, of that year, that he had removed his family to the new town. The part of his family at that time with him consisted of two daughters, Johanna Grace and Juliana Sarah. With several servants and their household goods, they established themselves at "the Point of the Forks" to do the honors of the first official residence there.¹

Parsons acted as agent at Easton of the Proprietaries of the Province, looking after their property interests in the region and promoting the sale and settlement of lands. He served as the first Prothonotary, Clerk of the Court,² Recorder, Clerk of the Commissioners and Justice of the Peace.

In 1754 he represented Northampton County in the Assembly and in 1755, was commissioned a Major of Continental Troops. During the Indian outbreak of that period, he bore the responsibility for the care of the imperiled infant settlement, and for a short time supervised the defences of the region. Through

¹ The substantial stone house which Mr. Parsons built, in 1757, as his second residence, is still standing at the north-east corner of Fourth and Ferry Streets. In that house Governor Morris had his quarters during the Indian treaty of 1757, and there Parsons died a few months later. After his death it was occupied by George Taylor, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who died there in 1781.

² Among some of his papers which, after his decease, came into the hands of Justice Timothy Horsfield, of Bethlehem, executor of his estate, there remains, in the Bethlehem archives, his commission as first Clerk of the Orphans' Court of Northampton County, inscribed on parchment. It was issued and signed for Thomas and Richard Penn, Proprietaries, by James Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor, "the Fifth Day of May in the Twenty Fifth Year of the Reign of King George the Second over Great Britain &c. and in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifty Two." It is endorsed as "entered in the Rolls Office at Philadelphia in Commission Book A. Vol. 2nd, Page 117, on the 6th day of May, 1752," by "C. Brockden, Dep." and bears the autograph of James Hamilton. It also shows evidence of later less dignified use in another inscription: "For Stocks, Notes, Sundrie People, Lehigh Navigation." It was used as a wrapper for a bundle of securities. The name of Eliza Horsfield, evidently owner of at least some of them, also appears on the back of it.

his personal efforts the first building for school and worship was erected at the new county-seat. He, therefore, well deserves the title that has been given him—"the Father of Easton." He ended his days there, December 17, 1757.

He always cherished a prejudice against the German race and until near the close of his life had a strong antipathy for the Moravians. He publicly maintained and represented to the Proprietaries that the proximity of the Moravian settlements was a detriment to the prosperity of the new county-seat and he put obstacles in the way of further acquisition of land in Northampton County by the Moravians. To prevent them from getting possession of large tracts of the "dry lands," between Bethlehem and Nazareth, his lesser prejudice yielded to the greater and he advocated selling them off in small tracts to the country "Dutchmen." During the last two years of his life his feelings in this respect changed and his attitude towards the people of Bethlehem and Nazareth became quite friendly.

Very little has appeared in print about his wife and children. All of them, excepting two who died in Philadelphia, were regularly connected with the Moravian Church. This fact indeed was both a root of bitterness in his heart which marred his domestic relations, and the secret of his long aversion to the Moravians.

The ancestry and connections of his wife are of some interest as are also the marriage relations of two of his daughters.

He was married at Philadelphia, in 1722, to Johanna Christiana Zeidig. Her father was John Julius Zeidig. Her mother was Salome Margaret Sprögel, a daughter of the Rev. John Henry Sprögel, a widely-known clergyman and educator of Quedlinburg, in the Saxon Province of Prussia.

Another daughter of Sprögel was the wife of the Rev. Gottfried Arnold, church historian and hymn-writer, some time professor at the University of Giessen and later pastor at Berleburg—a man of great learning, but disposed strongly to mysticism and theosophy and, like many of his time, in the attempt to put heart and life into the leathery scholasticism of Protestant orthodoxy, drifted into religious vagaries of which Berleburg was a center. The effects of this kind of religious atmosphere were imbibed by his wife's niece, the wife of Parsons, who was a representative of the type of piety which prevailed among so many of that period whose hearts cried out for nourishment

and, failing to find it in the regular schools which assumed to dispense the Divine oracles, often fed their craving with morbid food. She seems to have had another aunt, Anna Elizabeth, who came to Pennsylvania and was married to a certain Hoppe. Two of her uncles were John Henry Sprögel and Ludwig Christian Sprögel—names familiar to the student of Pennsylvania history.

Mrs. Parsons states, in her autobiography, that her father was a pious man, but her mother—although a pietistic clergyman's daughter—was fond of gay society. They lived at Eisleben—Luther's birthplace—in the Kingdom of Saxony, but the subject of this sketch was born, May, 1699, at Quedlinburg, where her mother was temporarily sojourning. Her parents were later reduced to such poverty that she had to be cared for by relatives—from her tenth to her thirteenth year by her uncle, Gottfried Arnold, then residing at Berleburg, and after that by another uncle, a clergyman in Westphalia, whose name has not been ascertained.

She states that when she was seventeen years old, her uncle Sprögel—doubtless Ludwig Christian—arrived there from America on a visit and offered to bring her with him to this country. She gladly assented and, after taking leave of her uncle in Westphalia, she followed Sprögel by way of Amsterdam to England, where she embarked with him for Philadelphia. Nothing is on record concerning the five years of her life in Philadelphia prior to her marriage with William Parsons in 1722. She was probably under the care of one of the Sprögels.

The most conspicuous trait of her character that has come to light was the restless, somewhat morbid religious bent already alluded to. At Philadelphia she first affiliated with the Tunkers under Alexander Mack, without, as it seems, being immersed by them. She later sank into a state of spiritual distress in which, as she relates, she feared that she would lose her reason. She says that when she was married to Mr. Parsons she cherished great love and esteem for him, regarded him as much her superior, hoped to find true happiness in her union with him, but, being disappointed in her religious cravings, became despondent.

It seems that Parsons was, at that time, in nominal connection with the Lutheran Church, but was absorbed in studies and plans in the direction of his personal inclinations and am-

bitions, had no sympathy with fervent piety and was by temperament disqualified to appreciate the heart-yearnings of his German wife. She relates that she once disclosed her spiritual unrest to him and that he tried to soothe her with the assurance that it would subside, as he had found to be the case with himself. At other times she met indifference and even harshness from him.

Amid the babel of sects, she next came into contact with certain "French Prophets," who gave her books to read in which she thought for a while that she had found new light. This statement of Mrs. Parsons is interesting, because these enthusiasts are not commonly mentioned in enumerations of the sects which presented such a motley array in Pennsylvania in those days.

After vainly trying to sift out the truth for herself by comparing the many discordant teachings prevalent, she withdrew from all religious associations and became a Separatist, finally finding stoical satisfaction in a kind of Agnosticism. When the famous preacher George Whitefield came to Philadelphia, her uneasiness of mind and heart revived, but she found no permanent benefit in his sermons. Then came the Moravian evangelists, whose message struck a different key from any that had been heard. She was persuaded to attend their meetings and heard that which truly appealed to her. Her husband was bitterly opposed to them under the influence of the misrepresentation and calumny which had preceded them to Pennsylvania and the fear of damage to his popularity in certain quarters, which might result from his seeming to be associated with people who were denounced by those whose favor he was then courting. He forbade the members of his family to attend the services of the Brethren, and when his wife seemed disposed to do so nevertheless, he threatened to forsake her if she did not follow his wishes.

Her children became warmly attached to the little society gathered by the Brethren in Philadelphia, and she, at last, found what satisfied her heart in the preaching of the Rev. John Christopher Pyrlaeus who, as Count Zinzendorf's assistant, was ministering to a number of Lutherans who had been without a pastor, was finally mobbed by a rabble at the instigation of Zinzendorf's enemies and later became eminent in Indian linguistic work.

In 1745, Parsons really carried his threat into execution. Leaving his wife in Philadelphia, he took his two youngest daughters, Johanna Grace and Juliana Sarah, to a distant neighborhood on the Swatara Creek, where he owned a tract of land. There he placed them in charge of a quite irreligious woman while he was absent on surveying expeditions. When he resigned as Surveyor General and settled at Lancaster, he took them with him, but the following year yielded to their wishes and permitted them to return for a while to their mother in Philadelphia. The latter was baptized there by Bishop Cammerhoff in January, 1751, and admitted to the communicant membership of the Moravian Church. She and her husband were never re-united. At the time of his death in Easton in December, 1757, he intimated a desire to see her once more, but it was too late. He sent her a message expressing his deep regret that this could not be and telling her that her Saviour was now his Saviour and that he could die in peace. Mrs. Parsons removed to Bethlehem in 1769 and ended her days in the Widows' House at that place on March 10, 1773. She was the mother of six children, concerning whom the following facts have been collected from various sources:—

I. SUSANNA PARSONS seems to have been the oldest daughter. Little is on record about her. She was never married. She apparently shared her mother's temperament and particular cast of religious thought and feeling, and was drawn by the services and preaching of the Brethren. The Rev. Thomas Yarrel, ministering in Philadelphia, makes the following statements about her in a report to the Executive Board—then styled Helpers' Conference—at Bethlehem: Referring to her as a sister of Robert Parsons, he says her father tried hard to bring about her marriage to a worldly-minded young man. He took her into the country and thought to divert her with all kinds of amusements, but she could not be satisfied. She returned to the city sick. Her illness increased and she expressed a wish to be baptized. This took place on October 13, O. S., 1746. The rite was performed by the Rev. Matthew Reuz in her father's house in the presence of the officials of the English Moravian Church of Philadelphia. Her father tolerated, but did not approve it, and declined to be present. Four days later—October 17—she died and her remains were interred in "the Potter's Field."

2. ROBERT PARSONS, referred to in the above statement, is the subject of the following extract from a letter of Yarrel, entered in the minutes of the Helpers' Conference at Bethlehem, May 7, 1746. "Three years ago he was spiritually awakened. His father was greatly provoked and threatened to disinherit him. He then remained away from the Brethren. His father placed him with a merchant to learn the business. His apprenticeship was nearly at an end and his father had built him a nice store. A short time ago he fell sick and was much distressed because he had disobeyed the Saviour and followed his father. He died on Sunday, April 27. Shortly before his death he was in a happy frame of mind and turned to the Saviour in much simplicity." His father, who sat by him, said to him, "Robert, use your reason! use your reason!"

3. HANNAH PARSONS WORRALL, another daughter about whom little is known, departed this life in child-bed, according to the Moravian Church Diary of Philadelphia, January 20, 1753, in that city. Her husband seems to have been James Worrall. A son-in-law so named is mentioned in the will of Mr. Parsons, signed, December 15,³ and proved at Philadelphia, December 21, 1757.

The diary states that a short time before, she dreamed that some one said to her, you have all your things nicely arranged, but you have forgotten the shroud, and that she took this as a sure omen of her approaching end. It is also recorded that before her death she asked her husband to take the wedding-ring from her finger and that when he did not do so, she took it off herself and, handing it to him, said, "My dear, you and I must part. We have not been together very long, but we must part. I am going to be married to another spouse (meaning the heavenly Bridegroom of the soul), but I suppose you do not understand this." The record adds that, thereupon, she departed and that this was the third of the children of Mrs. Parsons who had died a happy death.

³ The Bethlehem church diary has the following: "*Dec. 15.*—Mr. Parsons, the Prothonotary of our County, who seems to be near his end, notified his children, who were concerned about him, through Bro. Horsfield whom he always regarded as his good friend, that he had nothing against them and sent them his blessing. He also manifested appreciation of the kindness shown him by the Brethren."

4. ANNA MARY PARSONS, familiarly referred to in some records as Molly Parsons, was the third daughter. She was born in Philadelphia, but the date has not been ascertained. She was baptized there, January 30, 1745, by the Rev. Peter Boehler, later Bishop. She soon entered the service of the Moravian Church and, October 27, 1748, was formally and officially recognized as so engaged, and enrolled in the grade of Acolytes. She was one of the twenty-one Single Sisters who on November 13, 1748, removed together from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and on November 15 took possession of the original Sisters' House, previously the Brethren's House—the south-west corner section and oldest part of the mass of buildings on Church Street yet so styled.

She was married, March 31, 1756, to the Rev. Jacob Rogers, a widower. He had been a Deacon of the Church of England and joined the Moravian Church at Bedford in 1741. His first wife died in London, July 12, 1751. There he was ordained a Presbyterian, February 14, 1752. He arrived at New York on the Moravian church-ship *Irene*, May 17, 1752. He served as one of the English preachers of the Church, principally in New York and Philadelphia, and performed much labor in translating and copying church documents. June 22, 1758, he started from Bethlehem with his wife for the Wachovia tract in North Carolina. This Moravian domain had, by act of Assembly, been constituted one of the parishes of North Carolina and, in honor of the Governor of that time, named Dobbs Parish. Rogers was installed as the first Rector of the parish. He thus became the English Moravian minister of the neighborhood. July 19, 1759, Mrs. Rogers died of fever at Bethabara, the first settlement on the tract. Rogers returned to Pennsylvania and in July, 1762, to England, where he died in the Spring of 1779. Their child, Johanna Salome, born December 10, 1758, at Bethabara, was brought to Bethlehem after her mother's death, by John Ettwein, and died there, September 14, 1769. William Parsons had no descendants, therefore, through this family. In accordance with his special request, Rogers officiated at his funeral, December 19, 1757, at Easton, which was attended by a number of persons from Bethlehem.⁴

⁴ According to the Bethlehem diary, Bishop Spangenberg, Squire Horsfield and Dr. Otto visited him, *November 29*. On *December 10*, Rogers and his wife and her

5. JOHANNA GRACE PARSONS, commonly referred to in records and correspondence as Gracy Parsons, one of the two younger daughters whom their father took with him into the country and who were with him when he settled at Easton, was born in Philadelphia, November 28, 1736. She seems to have been his favorite daughter, and remained with him until danger from hostile Indians in November, 1755, induced him to send her back to Philadelphia to her mother and younger sister Sarah. Her journey on that occasion, enhanced in interest by her being the bearer of one of his official messages to the Government, was an episode, amid the thrilling and pathetic experiences of the time, which successive modern writers with a slim stock of facts, but aided by imagination, have developed, more and more, into a pretty picture with various embellishments.⁵

The authentic, original statements which form the basis are a passage in one of the letters of Mr. Parsons, published without date in *Colonial Records*, Vol. VI, p. 737, and an indorsement to another dated "Easton, Novr. the 30th, 1755," and published in *Pennsylvania Archives*, Vol. II, p. 534. Both are addressed to Secretary Peters. The first, written probably, November 27, follows one written to Governor Morris, November 25, referring to the massacre at Gnadenhuetten on the Mahoning, of which he had just heard from Timothy Horsfield of Bethlehem; urging the importance of protecting Easton, Bethlehem and Nazareth, and begging for arms and ammunition. The letter of November 25 is published in *Pennsylvania Archives*, II, 515. That of November 27, referred to above, says "The powder and lead came to hand, but no letter, and I don't know what we shall do for want of arms." Then follows the passage which

sister, Johanna Grace, visited him, having been notified by special messenger that he wished to see them. The diary of *December 17*, the day of his death, states that he gathered his children about him — their mother was in Philadelphia, unable to reach his bedside — and said to them that his religion was briefly stated: He believed that he was in the hands of a merciful God, through the merits and intercessions of a Mediator. Upon Him he placed his confidence and hoped that God would receive his spirit through Jesus the Mediator. *December 22* it is noted that Timothy Horsfield and John Okely, of Bethlehem, were making an inventory of his estate, the former having been named as executor of his will.

⁵ See e. g. first, *History of the Lehigh Valley*, by M. S. Henry, p. 64; then Captain Ellis in *History of Northampton County*, Peter Fritts, Philadelphia and Reading, p. 148; and finally *History of Easton*, by the Rev. Uzal W. Condit, A.M., pp. 22-26.

alludes to his daughter: "If I can get a Waggon to bring my Daughter to Philadelphia, I will send her off immediately, by which Waggon may be sent Arms, etc., if any are to be had." The letter of November 30 begins: "Since writing my last, of the 27th Instant, everything remains pretty quiet." It refers to the latest reports, sets forth the danger of keeping certain Indian prisoners at Easton and complains of imposition upon Easton hospitality by Jerseymen, and adds in a postscript: "If we are not furnished with Supplys of Men, Arms, Ammunition and Provisions we shall not be able to hold our Ground." The interesting indorsement to this letter reads: "Wm. Parsons. 30 Novr, 1755. Rec'd Saturday Morn'g by Express, Grace Parsons." Either the date "November 30" should be November 29 or "Saturday" should be Sunday. November 30, 1755, was Advent Sunday.

These sources, however, establish the fact that Parsons carried out his intention of sending his daughter to Philadelphia and that she was the bearer of this letter of November 30 (29?) to Secretary Peters. Whether she made the journey in a wagon or on horseback is not stated. It is not probable that she went alone, as writers usually assume. It was not necessary for him to hazard his daughter's life by sending her alone. Messengers were frequently going to Philadelphia from Bethlehem and Easton and the two places were in constant communication. His principal purpose in sending his daughter to Philadelphia was to get her out of danger. The situation depicted by the elaborated descriptions of this episode is, to some extent, a fictitious one.

Grace Parsons remained with her mother in Philadelphia until May 2, 1757, when she removed to Bethlehem and became a resident of the Sisters' House. She and her sister Sarah were baptized together at Bethlehem on May 29, 1757, when she was given the additional name Johanna, and her sister, who before that was called simply Sarah, received the name Juliana. Their father was at that time an invalid and was away from home seeking restoration of his health. Grace was married at Bethlehem, July 29, 1758, to Nicholas Garrison, Jr., son of the famous Moravian sea captain, Nicholas Garrison, Sr., and himself a seaman at two different periods of his life. He possessed some skill in drawing and sketching, and executed several noted

views of Moravian settlements. Their first child, John Nicholas,⁶ was born at Bethlehem, October 26, 1760, and they seem to have had another son, Frederick. In 1762 they removed to Philadelphia, where Garrison engaged in business for some years. They appear in lists of Philadelphia Moravians as late as the close of 1778, when they are mentioned among the families who had fled from the city when it was captured by the British.

Later references to them in the records thus far examined are meager and fragmentary, and after 1780, when they were residents of Berks County, Pa., in connection with the Heidelberg Moravian congregation, no mention of them has been found.⁷

6. JULIANA SARAH PARSONS, the youngest daughter, usually called Sallie Parsons, was born in Philadelphia, November 19, 1738. Her brief autobiography contains the principal points of information about the movements of the family from the time when Parsons forsook his wife in Philadelphia, to his death at Easton. She expresses, in fervent language, her gratitude for the pleasing state of mind and heart in which her father passed away. When she was baptized at Bethlehem with her sister, Grace, in 1757, she was temporarily sojourning at the place. She removed from Philadelphia and became a permanent resi-

⁶ An autograph letter of August 13, 1774, from Mrs. Garrison to Bishop Nathanael Seidel, of Bethlehem, asking that this son, then in school, might be permitted to visit them, as her husband, then again following the sea, expected shortly to sail for St. Croix, is yet in existence. She expresses concern about her son's spiritual condition. He also became a sailor, and the Englishman who translated the "*Voyage dans l'Amérique septentrionale dans les années, 1780-1882*," of the Marquis Francois Jean de Chastellux, who visited Bethlehem in 1782, refers to the young man in very uncomplimentary terms in a note. Nothing is known of the later career of this grandson of William Parsons.

⁷ A note furnished the compiler of this paper some years ago by Dr. John W. Jordan, of Philadelphia, refers to a deed made, May 10, 1779, by Nicholas and Johanna Garrison — she used only this name in later years — for a piece of property on Race Street, Philadelphia. Garrison describes himself as a mariner, "late of Philadelphia, but now of Reading-Town in the County of Berks." Official records refer to them as visiting in Bethlehem during the summer of 1780, when Mrs. Garrison was in failing health. There is also an allusion, in July of that year, to his intention, afterwards abandoned, of opening a store at Heidelberg. No descendants of Mr. Parsons through this line, after the second generation, have been heard of.

dent of the Bethlehem Sisters' House on February 24, 1758. She was then officially employed in church service in connection with the education and care of children.

October 14, 1766, she was married to Timothy Horsfield, Jr., son of Justice Timothy Horsfield and apothecary at Bethlehem. She was his second wife and was the mother of three sons. One son, Timothy, died in childhood. The other two were William, born, 1770, and died at Bethlehem, 1845, and Thomas, later a man of celebrity, born, 1773, and died, 1859, in London, England. A special note on him is added. She became a widow, April 11, 1789. In 1797 she removed to the Widows' House of Bethlehem, where she died, January 17, 1808.

Her son, William Horsfield, married Rebecca Weiss, daughter of Col. Jacob Weiss, the founder of Weissport, in Carbon County, the site of Fort Allen during the Indian War, 1755-56, and before that the second site of the Moravian Indian Mission, Gnadenhuetten. Horsfield kept store at Nazareth and Emmaus and passed his declining years at Bethlehem. He and his wife died only six days apart, he on February 8, and she on February 14, 1845. Their three children died before them, but they were survived by seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. The present posterity of William and Rebecca Horsfield are therefore descendants of William Parsons.

Thomas Horsfield, M.D., the second of the sons of Timothy and Juliana Sarah Horsfield, who grew to manhood, and the only other grandson of Mr. Parsons whose career is known, was born at Bethlehem, May 12, 1773. He received his early education in the boys' school of Bethlehem and in Nazareth Hall, pursued a course in pharmacy with his father in the apothecary establishment of Dr. Otto, at Bethlehem, devoting special attention also to botany, and later attended lectures at the University of Pennsylvania, where he took his degree. His thesis—"An Inaugural Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine, submitted to the examination of the Rev. John Ewing, S. T. P. Provost, the Trustees and Medical Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, on the 22nd day of May, 1798"—was entitled: "An Experimental Dissertation on the Rhus Vernix, Rhus Radicans and Rhus Glabrum, commonly known in Pennsylvania by the names of Poison-ash, Poison-vine and Common Sumach, by Thomas Horsfield, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania,

Member of the Medical and Chemical Societies of Philadelphia."⁸

Later he went to England and then to the East Indies in the service of the East India Company. He attained a distinct reputation in scientific circles, both as a practitioner and as an author. His extensive researches as a naturalist were pursued to a considerable extent on the Island of Java. His best-known publications are: *Zoological Researches in Java*, 1821-1824, and a second edition later; *Lepidopterous Insects*, 1857, and *Plantae Javanicae Rariores*—a description of his own collections in that island. He was the first librarian of the East India House in London, and had his home in that establishment until his death, July 24, 1859, in his 87th year. He was married in the East Indies and had two children, Charles Cooper Horsfield, and a daughter. Nothing further is known by the compiler of this paper about his posterity. He remained, to the end of his life, a devoted member of the Moravian Church and a faithful supporter of its mission work. The library of the Moravian Historical Society possesses an interesting and valuable memento of the venerable Dr. Horsfield; a volume from his library with his autograph presentation written on the fly-leaf, in a bold, steady hand, on May 27, 1859, only a few weeks before his death. It is a copy of the German "Larger Catechism"⁹ of the ancient Unitas Fratrum, viz., that of 1554, translated by John Gyrck, together with the Latin of 1616.

If, sometime, the hitherto unpublished matter relating to William Parsons, which may be found in the collections of the

⁸ In the archives at Bethlehem there is a copy of the Dissertation, a work of 88 pages, printed by Charles Cist, No. 104 North Second Street, Philadelphia, 1798. It was the property of Bishop Charles Gotthold Reichel, and contains his autograph with the note, "June 27, 1799, presented by Thomas Horsfield." On the inner fly-leaf stands, in the handwriting of the author, "For the Revd. Charles G. Reichel, with the best wishes of his friend, the author."

⁹ The ancient German title of this literary and ecclesiastical rarity reads: "Catechismus der Rechtgläubigen Behemischen Brüder welche der Antechrist mit seinem gottlosen Anhang verfolget, und aus teuflischem eingegeben, Hass, Neid und unwahrheit, für Verführer, Picarden und Waldenser, &c. schilt und lestert, allen Recht-schaffenen gleubigen zum trost und warem Bericht, Verdeutschet Durch Johannem Gyrck Strilnensem, Pfarhern zu Reidenburgk in Preussen, M.D.LIIII."

The Latin title reads: "Catechesis Christiana, ad Instituendam Piam Juventutem conscripta: in qua summa doctrinae Dei proponitur et explicatur. Ex Boemico idiomate in litinum translata. Anno Domini M.DC.XVI."

Historical Society of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, is drawn upon to present the man, his career and his connections more fully, the foregoing facts, gathered mostly from Moravian records, will have been made available for information which is not preserved anywhere else.

The tribute which Easton owes to his memory has been a subject of remark by different writers. The prominent connection of his family with the Moravian Church, in striking contrast with his personal attitude towards it for some years, has not been generally known. The association of the names of Parsons of Easton and Horsfield of Bethlehem in joint responsibilities of civil office, during the troubles of the French and Indian War, and then, also, in marriage relations, suggests various points of common historical and sentimental interest. That Parsons at one time jealously tried to prejudice the Penns against Bethlehem need not cause descendants of the Moravian fathers to view with indifference any tokens of regard which people of the county-seat may yet be disposed to show to the memory of him who "rocked Easton in her cradle and watched over her infant footsteps with paternal solicitude," if in some way his name should yet be exalted to new honor in connection with an enterprise which at its inception involved the prospect of a rude disturbance of his unheeded grave.

It so happened that the year and the month—May, 1901—which marked the bi-centennial anniversary of his birth, brought the announcement in the newspapers that the spot where his remains rested was to be sold "as a site for the free library that is to be established with the \$50,000 that Andrew Carnegie has agreed to give the city." A more pretentious undertaking, forsooth, than the first institution in the interest of popular education which Parsons succeeded in erecting at Easton, and a larger gift than the £30 Pa. currency which he secured from the Trustees of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge among the Germans in America. Whether more significant and deserving of more credit, if the conditions and circumstances, then and now, are duly considered, this paper need not say. When the remains were disinterred from other graves, preparatory to commencing the structure, "Parson's body was left as a mark of special remembrance." The library building is completed, opened and dedicated, and some have wondered

whether in some further way his name will not be associated with this new monument of progress in fostering that culture to which he and his cotemporaries at Bethlehem and Nazareth aspired, amid rude, back-woods surroundings. October 27, 1903, his grave was opened and his skeleton was found "well-preserved, though the bones had lain in the grave for 146 years." There is no irony in the statement that they were dis-interred for the purpose of burying them deeper. It will not mean greater oblivion, but more distinct regard, in a grave conformable to the new grade of the improved grounds, and made more conspicuous by the arrangements for preserving it as a historic spot.